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STEM Hub Computer Science Grants
FAQs & Information Session Questions

Background:

In May 2022, Governor Brown directed the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) and the Higher Education Coordinating Commission to develop a statewide implementation plan for computer science education, which would provide access to comprehensive computer science education opportunities to every public school student in this state by the 2027-2028 school year. The development of the statewide implementation plan will begin in September 2022 with more information forthcoming. The directive also requires the ODE to award $5 Million in GEER funding grants to provide opportunities for students, particularly for women and students of color, to access computer science learning and enrichment opportunities during the 2022-23 school year.

Purpose:

The purpose of this FAQ is to answer and share questions that were asked during Office Hours and the initial Grant Launch meetings, as well as other questions ODE has received. If you have additional questions that you would like added, please send them to ODE.CSInitiative@ode.oregon.gov.

Sections:

Scope of Project

Partners

Application Process

Funding

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Scope of Project:

Question #1: Is funding allowed for PreKindergarten?
Answer: Yes, as long as the PreKindergarten program is associated with a public school district.

Question #2: With these funds would it be possible to support CS courses at community colleges? Is this part of the CTE programs mentioned in the application?
Answer: This would be allowable if the funds are supporting increased access for public high school students during the duration of the grant. This might also be an opportunity to provide professional learning related to equity in computer science education for the college instructors of those courses. Contact your CTE Regional Coordinator or Community College CTE Leader to determine whether the courses are part of a CTE Program of Study.

Question #3: Will after school programs qualify, and do programs in specific districts have to be offered to all schools in that district to be equitable?
Answer: After school programs can be included in the activities supported by this grant as long as they serve public school students and meet grant criteria. They do not have to be offered to every school in a district, but providing the opportunity to multiple schools is one way to build a more sustainable program and to increase access.

Question #4: With the focus on students of color and young women, are Hubs expected to implement programs in every district or every county? What are the location parameters for scope of reach?
Answer: ODE is looking for how projects are working toward increasing access, and this should be a priority focus over location parameters. This may look different region by region.

Question #5: What is the definition of computer science? How does Digital Literacy fit into this scope?
Answer: The grant parameters document defines Computer Science (CS) as: "Computer Science is the study of computers and algorithmic processes, including their principles, their hardware and software designs, their applications, and their impact on society" (Computer Science Teachers Association). Computer Science creates the conceptual and theoretical foundations related to computer literacy, educational technology, digital citizenship, and information technology. The K-12 Computer Science Framework identifies the core concepts and practices that help define a comprehensive computer science education. Another resource can be found at the Computer Science for All in SF website. Digital literacy on the other hand, refers to "...the ability to use information and communication technologies to find, evaluate, create, and communicate information, requiring both cognitive and technical skills." (American Library Association). While digital literacy skills are cross-cutting across content areas, the focus of this

grant is on computer science rather than digital literacy. Therefore, while there is overlap between digital literacy and computer science, we encourage grant participants to focus on projects that integrate computational thinking (algorithmic thinking, navigating multiple levels of abstraction, decomposing problems into manageable pieces, and representing data through models) and computer literacy in order to meet the grant parameters. If questions arise regarding the grant parameters related to digital literacy, please consult ODE for support.

Partners:

Question #6: Is there a list of CTE Regional Coordinators that includes a list of the programs of study by district or region?
Answer: The 2022-23 Regional Coordinators directory lists all the CTE Regional Coordinators and their associated regions. ODE is developing a new online report to list CTE Programs of Study. The current report only goes through the 2020-2021 school year. A CTE Regional Coordinator can provide the most current information for their region.

Question #7: Not all Hub partner organizations are culturally specific. Are there more details around that definition that may be broader?
Answer: The intent of the definition for Community Based Organizations used in the grant is to expand partnerships to make sure that there are connections with the focal groups, especially students of color, that are called for in the Governor's Directive. There is no limit to inclusion of other appropriate partners that would help meet grant criteria.

Question #8: How might Hubs work with smaller partner organizations that are unable to work on a reimbursement financial structure?
Answer: Work with the Hub's fiscal department to determine the appropriate contracting processes and timelines. Each fiscal agent is still obligated to work under a reimbursement process through the Electronic Grants Management System (EGMS), meaning reimbursement can only be made for services completed and materials received by September 30, 2023. Also, contractors may be required to hold insurance against certain risks. Please make sure any partner receiving contracts can meet those requirements.

Question #9: Do Hubs provide supporting documents to confirm the partners are actually invested partners, or just list them?
Answer: Only a list of grant partners is required. That list can be updated quarterly as project activities roll out.

Question #10: What other partners have been informed of this opportunity? Who might reach out to Hubs to find out more about how to access this funding?

Answer: ODE has reached out to several groups engaged in regional and statewide support for computer science education, and encouraged those groups to contact STEM Hubs and provided them with the grant timeline. ODE encourages STEM Hubs to reach out to individual organizations or work with ODE to assist with that outreach.

Question #11: Is ODE tracking Community Based Organizations that are focused on Computer Science?

Answer: ODE is currently compiling a list of CBOs with whom STEM Hubs may choose to partner. Check back to the STEM Hubs Computer Science Grant web page periodically for this information. In addition, STEM Hubs have built relationships with many of these organizations over the years. Please contact partner Hubs about how to reach out to organizations that may be willing to help.

Question #12: Is there a statewide list of informal programs working in this space?

Answer: There are a number of national and statewide organizations that ODE is compiling into a list. Check back to the STEM Hubs Computer Science Grant web page periodically for this information.

Application Process:

Question #13: Can STEM Hubs apply in a consortia to spend part of the allocation and then an individual application to spend the remaining amount?

Answer: Yes, Hubs may apply as a separate entity as well as part of one or more consortia. Hubs should submit only one application and indicate on the application the projects which they are leading solely or as a lead for a consortium, as well as the projects and funding associated with consortia for which they are not a lead.

Question #14: What are the advantages and disadvantages to applying within a consortium?

Answer: Depending upon the capacity of each hub and the quick timeline for these funds, it may be beneficial to apply within a consortium and leverage existing programs. However, each region is unique in their needs and may find that applying separately will benefit their region the most.

Question #15: Can ODE clarify this bullet under 'Application Evaluation': "Equitable support is provided for school districts within the STEM Hub region."

Answer: This is purposefully open-ended language. Schools are in a variety of different positions related to computer science education. Make the greatest attempt possible and practical to reach out to schools, especially for those schools who don't work regularly with the Hubs. This might be more complex when working in consortia.

Question #16: Are there requirements to add all STEM Hubs working in a consortium to certificates of insurance?
Answer: Each party within a consortium shall insure or self-insure and be independently responsible for the risk of its own liability for claims, and the Lead Hub is not required to add all STEM Hubs working in a consortium to their certificate of insurance. However, all subcontractors must obtain the insurance specified within the grant requirements.

Question #17: How reliable is the timeline on when Hubs would receive IGAs?
Answer: The IGA process may have a variable timeline, but the target date for agreements to be in place is November 30, 2022. ODE can look at how to communicate timelines with Hubs' fiscal agents so they can start the work earlier if needed. ODE recognizes that the Governor's Directive names this school year as the timeline, and is going to work as much as possible to meet this timeline.

Question #18: Given that meetings and planning take time, how detailed do applications need to be regarding specific programming or activities?
Answer: Because this is a short timeline to implement activities, be as specific as possible at this point in time. However, to allow for a quick shift in activities, Hubs may also consider adding information about a "Plan B" if one project becomes unattainable during the grant window. ODE will be meeting with each Hub prior to the September 30 application deadline to help refine the application and answer specific questions.

Question #19: Can ODE offer advice/suggestions to the STEM Hubs?
Answer: The team is happy to sit alongside and dive deeper if that would be helpful- reach us at ode.csinitiative@ode.oregon.gov.

Funding:

Question #20: How did ODE determine the funding distributions? This method is different from the collaborative method used in the Innovation Grant awards.
Answer: ODE determined the funding distribution model after internal consultation with internal program, administrative, procurement, and fiscal staff. The timeline required a process that would meet the equity goals and timeline of the Governor's Directive. The initial

distribution is based on student count, student poverty rates using census data, and ELL student counts. All of these parameters are part of the State School Fund calculations and have been used to determine fund distribution in other grants administered by ODE. The grant allows for redistribution of funds in collaboration with STEM Hubs to provide flexibility as projects are identified and proposals developed.

Question #21: Will the funding distributions change?
Answer: ODE does not anticipate the funding amounts changing. However, for Hubs applying in a consortium, funds from partnering Hubs will be added to the lead hub agreement. In addition, if Hubs choose not to participate, ODE will reallocate the funds across participants.

Question #22: Are all funds to be spent by the end of summer 2023?
Answer: Yes. The funds must be spent by September 30, 2023. This is a limitation of the GEER funds.

Question #23: Is there a precedent to extend the grant window to expend funds after 9/30/2023?
Answer: There is currently no expectation to extend the grant window after this date.

Question #24: Will this be a one time award, or does ODE expect that funds will be available in future years?
Answer: This is a one time award. The Statewide Implementation Plan due from ODE by September 2023 will hopefully lay the groundwork for future activities and perhaps future funding. One can not predict this, but in terms of this award, it is functionally a one-time award.

Question #25: Is the $5M allocated specifically for STEM Hubs, or can school districts also apply for these funds?
Answer: The $5.0 million allocation is specifically for STEM Hubs with the requirement that those Hubs work with school districts to identify opportunities and support those opportunities through materials and services contracts.

Question #26: When Hubs contract with a CBO can they charge an indirect, and does that come out of our indirect?
Answer: The indirect in a Hub's budget only includes the associated costs of indirect services provided by the fiscal agent. Hubs do not need to factor in any indirect costs charged to them by contractors. Hubs should work with their respective fiscal agent to determine if there are or should be limitations to indirect costs allowable in contracts issued by the fiscal agent.

Question #27: Is there a limit for Hub staff expenses included in the budget, perhaps as a percent of the total of the allocation?

Answer: There are no specific limitations placed on Hub staff expenses. These should be reasonable and consistent with existing fiscal agent practices and agreements.

Question #28: Are there caps on purchasing equipment? At what point does it become a capital purchase?

Answer: There are no caps on purchasing equipment as long as the equipment is used to directly increase opportunities for students. Equipment purchased strictly to administer the grant is not an allowable expense. Capital purchases apply to any single purchase for $5,000 or more and any installation of infrastructure or construction. All capital equipment purchases must be pre-approved by ODE. ODE is unlikely to approve infrastructure and construction costs due to strict federal limitation on those expenses.

Question #29: Are administrative costs limited to 5 percent, and how does this work for Hubs applying in a consortium?

Answer: The administrative costs allowable for this grant are limited to the percentage negotiated with ODE. Those costs are for the support provided by fiscal agents. In most cases that would exceed the 5% allowable under the STEM Innovation Grants. A contract issued by a fiscal agent may include administrative costs of the contractor. Those costs should be reasonable and consistent with the policies of each Hub's fiscal agent. For Hubs applying within a consortium, administrative costs should reflect that of the lead hub.

Question #30: If applying within a consortium, would the lead Hub submit EGMS claims?

Answer: Yes, the lead hub would submit these.

Activities:

Question #31: With the tight timeline, will the best approach be to build on things already happening?

Answer: This may differ between STEM Hubs and is best determined by each Hub. Any number of new or existing projects is allowable under this grant.

Question #32: Are there connection opportunities with other STEM Hub projects like Elementary STEAM Leaders, STEM Beyond School, etc.?

Answer: The grant allows for support of meaningful connections between computer science and other STEM activities. Consult with the leads for the other projects to determine if those

connections address the grant criteria and the definition of computer science found in the grant parameters document.

Question #33: If Hubs were to do a consortium, would partnering with the OR STEM Nonprofit be a possibility for a funding award?

Answer: STEM Hubs may contract with other organizations to meet the grant goals and criteria. If two or more Hubs wish to apply in a consortium, all funds will be issued to the lead STEM Hub which will be fully responsible for all contracts and associated with the activities of the grant. Nonprofits are not eligible for grant awards, but may contract with Hubs as part of activities to meet the grant requirements.

Question #34: Is Oregon Robotics Tournament and Outreach Program (ORTOP) involved in this funding?

Answer: ORTOP is not an eligible grant recipient for these funds. They may be eligible as a contractor/partner for a project included in your plan as long as they address one or more of the grant criteria as part of the work ORTOP does. Historically, ORTOP has provided grants to schools to support robotics teams using state and private funds. The federal GEER funds do not allow for any subgranting of the STEM Hub awards.

Question #35: How does this funding align with work that is currently happening in Computer Science?

Answer: One of the reasons grants are awarded to STEM Hubs is because of the current work in computer science that is part of the STEM Hub portfolio. ODE supports the idea of aligning funding to that work while recognizing that the funds may help expand district interest in that work.

Question #36: Does ODE have best practice recommendations for culturally responsive pedagogies for CS engagement strategies with priority populations that the Hubs can adopt in their programmatic planning?

Answer: There are a number of national organizations that publish or recommend these kinds of resources particularly as they relate to equity in CS. ODE is working on compiling a short list that may be most relevant to this work. Check back to the [STEM Hubs Computer Science Grant](#) web page periodically.

Question #37: How is Title IX addressed with these funds?

Answer: The preamble of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 states that "*No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, or denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any*

educational program or activity receiving federal assistance." These grant funds may not be used to support an activity that is promoted as serving a single gender. The grant can support activities that promote gender diversity.

Question #38: Can a Hub contract out the bulk of the grant amount to one contractor?
Answer: Hubs may contract out to one or more contractors, but may not subgrant out awards.

Question #39: Will ODE consider proposals that fund Professional Development?
Answer: Professional development is considered an important strategy for increasing equitable access to Computer Science. Funds may be used for professional development during the 2022-23 school year or the summer of 2023.

However, to ensure direct services and activities to students during the 2022-23 school year, up to 20% of each STEM Hub's allocation (or $1.25M across the entire allocation) may be used to support educator professional development. The Governor has increased the total amount for the grants to $6 million to help create more funds for professional learning. We will be updating the distribution amount for each Hub based on the funding model and will share those total amounts with you soon.

The professional development must be aligned to the grant criteria pertaining to serving historically and currently marginalized student groups, specifically women and students of color, and it must meet one or more of the following conditions:

> 1. The professional development is primarily intended to serve educators who will be providing Computer Science opportunities during the 2022-2023 school year but may include some educators who will start offering the same opportunities the following year.
> 2. The professional development primarily serves educators in districts that have demonstrated commitment to implementation in the 2023-2024 school year and beyond. The districts should also be willing to provide the STEM Hub with student data associated with that implementation.

 These activities should be clearly identified in the application and will need to be approved in advance by ODE.

Question #40: Regarding professional development: are offsite standalone professional development workshops appropriate, or is ODE looking for more in-classroom mentoring (i.e. coder in residence model)?
Answer: Professional Development may take many different forms, but must meet the criteria listed above.